

NSC BRIEFING

16 June 1959

IRAN

- I. The Shah apparently plans to adopt a tougher line toward the Soviet Union and possibly to embark more energetically on domestic reform.
- A. On his return from Europe on 4 June, he removed his ministers of foreign affairs, interior and commerce.
- B. Foreign Minister Hekmat had promoted the non-aggression treaty negotiations with USSR last January.
- 25X1X6 C. [REDACTED] has told us privately that Hekmat was not strong enough to counter Soviet diplomatic methods.
- II. New Foreign Minister Jalal Abdoh, who was Iran's Permanent Representative to the UN since 1955, is a stronger personality, experienced in international affairs, and strongly anti-Soviet.
- A. However, we have impression that newly appointed Minister of Interior Atabaki, and Commerce Minister Etebar are not really qualified for their positions, but presumably will obey Shah's orders.
- B. The Shah will now again try to push his reform program. There has, for example, been a growing popular disillusionment in Iran, over failure to implement the conflict of interest law among civil servants. His own relatives and court have violated it.
- III. The Shah fears Soviet propaganda may capitalize on domestic unrest, and he is showing more concern over intensive Soviet propaganda campaign against Iran since February when non-aggression treaty talks were broken off. ~~SECRET~~

IV. We are still concerned over Shah's continuing direct "ruling" even though he now aims to produce a more forthright position toward Soviet Union.

A. We are even more concerned over lack of improvement in Iran's economic and domestic affairs.